

FALLEN HEROES

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the heroic life of United States Army Staff Sergeant Joseph Garyantes who died May 19, 2004, while securing freedom for the people of Iraq. Staff Sergeant Garyantes was patrolling Muqadiyah, Iraq, just outside of Baghdad when his vehicle was attacked by sniper fire, ending the life of this dedicated soldier.

Staff Sergeant Garyantes was born in Wilmington, Delaware, and for most of his childhood called the Rehoboth Beach area home. He attended Epworth Christian School in Laurel, and at an early age contemplated a life in the Christian ministry. Eventually his selflessness and unwavering desire to help others drew him to military service. From what I have learned about this remarkable young man, it is apparent that Staff Sergeant Garyantes truly enjoyed helping others overcome the difficulties in their lives. For example, he wrote a letter to the editor while stationed in Germany, in response to a young soldier's complaint about the difficulties of Army life. His response was not negative or demeaning, he offered solutions and words of encouragement to this fellow soldier.

Staff Sergeant Garyantes, because of his inherent desire to lead and guide others to greatness, certainly would have found a way to inspire others in any career he chose, but he chose to join the U.S. Army. He chose to subject himself to the daily rigors of military service because he valued the well-being of others—ultimately at the cost of his own life. And although he will be missed tremendously by his wife and children, his family and friends, and his fellow soldiers, it is my hope that they can take comfort in his devotion to serving those in need, which will be his legacy.

Mr. Speaker, it is not often that I have the opportunity to honor the life of a true hero and American patriot such as Staff Sergeant Joseph Garyantes. His devotion to his fellow man is truly amazing, and he deserves our utmost respect and admiration.

RECOGNIZING KRIS ANNE
VOGELPOHL FOR RECEIVING THE
GOLD LANTERN AWARD FROM
THE GALVESTON ISLAND RAIL-
ROAD MUSEUM AND TERMINAL

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 3, 2004

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, the Galveston Island Railroad Museum and Terminal is one of Texas's most outstanding historic places, recognizing the importance of the railroads in building our great state. Galveston's success as a major American port was built on railroads, and the Museum celebrates that heritage.

In May the Museum gave its distinguished Gold Lantern Award to Mrs. Kris Anne

Vogelpohl of Galveston. Mrs. Vogelpohl personifies the mission of the Museum—to build a better community, illuminate the lives of Galvestonians, and teach thousands of visitors about its heritage.

Mrs. Vogelpohl is legendary in the gift of her time and energy to many local and national humanitarian organizations, including the Salvation Army and Prevent Blindness Texas.

Galveston has grown in greatness in recent years, and we have Mrs. Kris Anne Vogelpohl to thank for her tireless efforts toward making it a very special place.

FREEDOM FOR PEDRO PABLO
ALVAREZ RAMOS

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 3, 2004

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Pedro Pablo Alvarez Ramos, a prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Alvarez Ramos is a true leader for freedom, human rights, and worker rights for the Cuban people. He is President of the United Cuban Workers Council (CUTC), an organization dedicated to improving the condition and treatment of workers in totalitarian Cuba. As the President of CUTC, Mr. Alvarez Ramos has been a constant advocate for every Cuban worker currently toiling under the nightmare of repression called the Castro regime. Mr. Alvarez Ramos has bravely denounced the cruel policies of the tyrant and demanded that every Cuban laborer be allowed their inalienable human rights and worker rights.

Because Mr. Alvarez Ramos committed himself to achieving workers rights for every Cuban, he has been a constant target for the dictator's thugs. According to Amnesty International, Mr. Alvarez Ramos has been the subject of harassment and detention for his trade union activities since at least 1996. In October 2000, in connection with his work in preparing the first CUTC congress, Mr. Alvarez Ramos was thrown in the totalitarian gulag. Eventually, in November 2001, he was charged with resisting arrest and Mr. Alvarez Ramos was finally released from the horrors of the gulag in late January 2001.

On March 19, 2003, as part of the tyrant's brutal crackdown on peaceful pro-democracy activists, Mr. Alvarez Ramos's home was searched and his private library confiscated. He was subsequently sentenced by a sham court to 25 years in the totalitarian gulag because of his efforts for worker rights in Cuba.

Mr. Alvarez Ramos is languishing in the inhuman conditions of the totalitarian gulag, because he believes every Cuban worker should have rights, not repression. It is unconscionable that, at the dawn of the 21st century and just 90 miles from our shore, Mr. Alvarez Ramos is imprisoned in a gulag because he is attempting to achieve workers rights for the citizens of Cuba.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress convenes in a building that represents freedom to those languishing in the darkness of repression. It is incumbent on those of us who have the privilege of serving in this monument to liberty to demand freedom for all pro-democracy activists locked in infernal gulags. My Colleagues,

we must demand the immediate release of Pedro Pablo Alvarez Ramos, and every prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.

WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL STORY
IS CLASSIC AMERICAN DEMOC-
RACY

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 3, 2004

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, May 29, the National World War II Memorial was dedicated on the National Mall here in Washington. This memorial honors the courage and sacrifice of the millions of men and women who served our Nation during one of the most critical times in history.

How this monument came about is a classic story of American democracy. The spark came from Roger Durbin of Berkey, Ohio, who made the request to his U.S. Representative, MARCY KAPTUR. With the help of America's veterans, Congresswoman KAPTUR led the effort to pass legislation that authorized the memorial. I commend my distinguished colleague and good friend for her deep commitment to all our Nation's veterans and her extraordinary work on behalf of those who served in WWII.

The story of this legislation was told in an article which appeared in a special section of The Washington Post Sunday Magazine on May 23. For the benefit of my colleagues, I present the full text of the article.

[From the Washington Post, May 23, 2004]

A DREAM REALIZED

(By Suzan Richmond)

"This is really an American story," Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D., Ohio) began. "It all started at a township trustees fish fry, in February 1987. I was standing in the middle of a very large room, holding my plate. And all of a sudden, this big booming voice shouted across the large room: 'Congresswoman Kaptur, why is there no World War II memorial in Washington, D.C.?'"

"I turned. I see this man, standing erect, shoulders squared.

The man was Roger Durbin, then age 67, a retired letter carrier from Berkey, Ohio, population 272, who once was a tank mechanic in the Battle of the Bulge. "He had everyone's attention," Kaptur recalled.

She replied: "There is one."

"Oh, yeah?" he said. "What is it?"

"Two Jims."

"Wrong," he shot back. "That memorial is to one service in one campaign.

"I'm telling you, there's no place. I wanted to bring my grandchildren to a memorial when I was in Washington to show them what had affected my life. It's not there."

Once back in Washington, Kaptur did some research.

"I was stunned to find we had no central place in the capital to pay tribute to this generation. Durbin was right. I thought, this kind of omission couldn't be possible.

"I had been a member of Congress for a few years by then, but I really understood what being a representative was about after I met Roger," Kaptur continued.

"After that, we entered a marathon effort to pass the legislation essential to placing a memorial to World War II in Washington. I thought it would be easy. Boy, was I wrong."

Indeed, from fish fry to legislation to site selection to design competition to winning design to construction to a World War II Memorial ready for dedication took 17 years.